

American Citizen Bulletin

Message for U.S. Citizens

April 2013

April 4th, Thursday - The U.S. Embassy will be officially closed in observance of Tomb Sweeping Day (Chinese Holiday).

ACS has a **new E-mail address** effective March 15, 2013: BeijingACS@state.gov. Please use the new e-mail address BeijingACS@state.gov for inquiries NOT covered on our website. We will continue to monitor the old ACS e-mail address amcitbeijing@state.gov until May 15, 2013, at which time it will cease to remain active.

U.S. Taxpayers Living Abroad

What to Expect for Refunds in 2013

Last year the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued refunds to nine out of 10 taxpayers in less than 21 days, and the same is expected in 2013. Even though the IRS issues most refunds in less than 21 days, it's possible your tax return may require additional review and take longer. Use *Where's My Refund?* (<http://www.irs.gov/Refunds>) to Check the Status of Your Refund.

Where's My Refund? has a new look for 2013! The tool will include a tracker that displays progress through three stages: (1) Return Received, (2) Refund Approved and (3) Refund Sent. You will be able to begin checking the status of your return within 24 hours after your e-filed return has been received or four weeks after a paper return has been mailed. You will get personalized refund information based on the processing of your tax return. The tool will provide an actual refund date as soon as the IRS processes your tax return and approves your refund.

Additional Information can be found at: Pub 2043: IRS Refund Information Guidelines for the Tax Preparation Community or <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p2043en.pdf>.

Reporting of Specified Foreign Financial Assets

IRS notifies all **U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens** abroad that must report *specified foreign financial assets* for tax year 2012. Form 8938 (Statement of Specified Foreign Financial Assets) should be filed by taxpayers with specific types and amounts of foreign financial assets or foreign accounts. It is important for taxpayers to determine whether they are subject to this new requirement because the law imposes significant penalties for failing to comply.

Form 8938, the instructions, regulations implementing this new foreign asset report, and other information to determine if taxpayers are required to file Form 8938 is available on the web at: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/corporations/article/0,,id=236667,00.html>

Travel Tips For Frequent Travelers:

Spring-break is almost upon us. For those leaving Beijing during the school break please take note of the following for a worry-free vacation:

- ✓ **Register with ACS so the Embassy can better assist you in an emergency.** Record your travel plans or overseas residence online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. This will help us contact you if there is a family emergency in the United States, or if there is a crisis where you are traveling. In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare and whereabouts will not be released to others without your express authorization.
- ✓ **Sign your passport and fill in the emergency information.** Make sure you fill in the emergency information page of your passport. Write the contact information in pencil so you can change it as needed over time.
- ✓ **Leave copies of itinerary, passport data page, and credit card when you travel.** What happens if there's an emergency back home while you are traveling? Leave copies of your itinerary, passport data page and visas with family or friends so you can be contacted in case of an emergency. Leave a copy of your credit card too; in an emergency, the credit card company may help your family locate you.
- ✓ **Check your overseas medical insurance coverage.** Ask your medical insurance company if your policy applies overseas, and if it covers emergency expenses such as medical evacuation. If it does not, consider supplemental insurance. Medical treatment and evacuations can cost thousands of dollars.
- ✓ **Familiarize yourself with local conditions and laws.** While in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. The State Department web site at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html has useful safety and other information about China and other countries you may visit.
- ✓ **Take precautions to avoid being a target of crime.** To avoid being a target of crime when traveling, practice the same safety tips you would in any place with which you aren't familiar: do not wear clothing or jewelry that attracts attention and do not carry excessive amounts of cash. Also, do not leave unattended luggage in public areas and do not accept packages from strangers.
- ✓ **Contact us in an emergency.** We are here to help you in emergencies. Consular emergency duty personnel at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the United States are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens. You can reach us at (10) 8531-4000. Contact information for other U.S. Embassies and Consulates is listed at <http://travel.state.gov>.

The Department of State continues to develop information on potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threat information through its Consular Information Program documents, including **travel warnings**, **travel alerts**, **country specific information**, and **emergency messages**, all of which are available on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website at <http://travel.state.gov/>. Stay up to date by bookmarking the website or downloading its free

Smart Traveler iPhone App for travel information at your fingertips. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well.

In addition to information on the internet, travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or, from other countries, on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm Monday through Friday, Eastern Time (except U.S. federal holidays).

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

Stay Informed.

Sign up for our free [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (formerly known as “Travel Registration” or “Registration with Embassies”) to receive the latest travel updates and information!

When you sign up, you will automatically receive the most current information we compile about the country where you will be traveling or living. You will also receive updates, including [Travel Warnings](#) and [Travel Alerts](#) (where appropriate). You only need to sign up once, and then you can add and delete trips from your account based on your current travel plans!

Stay Connected.

By connecting with us on the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#), we will be able to assist you better in the case of an emergency, such as if you lose your passport or it is stolen while you are abroad.

We also assist U.S. citizens in other emergencies, such as in natural disasters. For example, after the earthquake in Haiti, we evacuated over 16,700 U.S. citizens and family members. During the civil unrest in Lebanon in 2006 we assisted nearly 15,000 U.S. citizens and family members, and in 2004 we helped thousands more during the tsunami.

The travel and contact information you enter into our [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) will make it easier for consular officers in U.S. embassies and consulates around the world to contact you and your loved ones during an emergency—including situations where your family or friends in the U.S. are having problems trying to contact you with important news.

Stay Safe.

We believe that a well-informed traveler is a safer traveler. Our consular officers around the world compile [country-specific information](#), [travel alerts](#), [travel warnings](#), fact sheets and emergency messages to provide you with timely and accurate travel information about every country where you may travel.

We include reports on possible risks and security threats so that you can make informed decisions about your travel plans and activities.

Stay informed by connecting with us via our [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) so you can have safe and enjoyable travels!